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BOOKMOBILES: BRINGING BOOKS TO RURAL READERS

THE GALLUP SURVEY: WHO READS MYSTERIES?

RELIGIOUS PUBLISHING

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The Gallup Survey

American Readers Love a Mystery

A majority of Americans read mysteries, according to a recent Gallup Survey. More than six in 10 (62%) adults interviewed by the Gallup Organization reported they had read a mystery book, with the college educated (74%), employed women (69%), those under 50 (67%) and people living on the East or West coasts (65% and 67% respectively) the most likely to have done so *(Table 1)*.

Among those who read mysteries, adventure and detective stories are the favorites, each read by more than 60% (the classifications are those of readers themselves). Crime novels are read by about half, and books about spies and political intrigue are next in line. Nearly a third have read a police mystery, and nearly a quarter have read a solve-it-yourself-style mystery *(Table 2)*.

Paperbacks are the dominant format for mystery books, with half of their readers saying that most of their last 10 purchases were in paperback. On average, 6.7 of the last 10 purchased were in that format *(Table 3)*.

Mystery readers prefer their books to be written in either a hard-boiled (29%) or romantic style (32%), but preferences, as might be expected, differ strongly by sex *(Table 4)*.

Mystery readers are also interested in sidelines; nearly half of them have purchased some other mystery-related product, with one in five having bought a mystery magazine (22%) or board game (21%), and one in 10 having bought a videotape (9%). Men are more likely than women to be interested in these related products, particularly magazines *(Table 5, on page 18)*.

—Leonard A. Wood

TABLE 1

MYSTERY READER DEMOGRAPHICS

Based on Total Respondents

	Ever Read a Mystery Book %	Number of Interviews
Total	62	(1554)
Sex		
Male	60	(779)
Female	64	(775)
Age		
18–24 years	70	(186)
25–34 years	68	(345)
35–49 years	65	(434)
50 and older	54	(583)
Education		
College	74	(574)
High school graduate	64	(627)
Less than high school graduate	43	(338)
Women's Employment Status		
Full time	68	(250)
Part time	72	(119)
Not employed	59	(389)
Region		
East	65	(390)
Midwest	60	(412)
South	59	(465)
West	67	(287)

TABLE 2

PREFERRED MYSTERY CATEGORIES

Based on Those Who Have Ever Read a Mystery

Type of Mystery	Type Have Ever Read %	Favorite Type %	Would Like More of %
Adventure	65	31	32
Detective	62	19	14
Crime	47	9	4
Spy/Political Intrigue	42	14	15
Police	32	3	4
Solve-It-Yourself	23	7	11
Other	2	2	2
Don't Know	2	15	15
Number of Interviews	(971)	(971)	(971)

TABLE 3

MYSTERIES IN PAPERBACK

Of Last 10 Mysteries Purchased Number of Paperbacks	Total Have Read a Mystery Book %
1	3
2–3	6
4–5	8
6–8	7
9–10	50
None	16
Don't know	10
Total	100
Mean Number of Paperbacks	6.7
Number of Interviews	(971)

TABLE 2

PREFERRED STYLE

	Hard-Boiled %	Romantic %	Number of Interviews
Total Have Read a Mystery	29	32	(971)
Sex			
Male	47	13	(463)
Female	14	49	(508)
Age			
18–24 years	33	37	(128)
25–34 years	34	28	(228)
35–49 years	27	33	(293)
50 years and older	25	32	(319)

Gallup Survey

TABLE 2

THE MARKET FOR RELATED PRODUCTS

	Magazine %	Board Game %	Video Tape %	Weekend %	Software %	Other %	None %	Don't Know %	No. of Interviews
Total Have Read a Mystery	22	21	9	3	3	–	50	2	(971)
Sex									
Male	26	22	11	3	5	–	44	2	(463)
Female	19	20	7	3	1	–	55	2	(508)
Age									
18–24 years	22	30	17	5	9	–	32	1	(128)
25–34 years	20	28	10	4	*	1	46	1	(228)
35–49 years	20	21	10	1	4	–	52	3	(293)
50 years and older	26	10	2	3	1	–	61	3	(319)
Education									
College	18	26	7	2	3	–	51	2	(425)
High school graduate	26	22	10	5	2	–	47	1	(399)
Less that high school graduate	23	7	11	3	4	–	52	5	(140)
Women's Employment Status									
Full time	20	19	10	1	2	–	56	–	(170)
Part time	17	35	5	–	2	–	49	–	(89)
Not employed	20	14	6	6	1	–	56	4	(237)
Region									
East	19	18	10	1	3	–	58	1	(246)
Midwest	23	24	5	3	2	–	50	3	(255)
South	27	20	10	6	2	–	43	1	(279)
West	18	22	11	1	6	1	49	3	(191)
Number of Mysteries Read in Past 3 Months									
None	19	20	9	2	2	–	51	2	(599)
One	24	27	7	6	3	–	50	–	(127)
Two	32	21	11	8	6	–	45	–	(70)
Three or more	29	23	9	3	2	–	46	1	(106)

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